



Department Updates

March 2019

Highway

Mark Servi
Highway Commissioner

Today is March 15th. A bright sunny Friday. The Highway Department crew has worked 45 of the past 47 days (including the past 26 in a row) responding to storms, cleaning up after storms and working to maintain the safety of the highway system. It has been a long stretch of winter. Earlier this week the temperature moderated and with that came rain, which has resulted in many water issues around the highway system, overflowing ditches, frozen culverts and roads completely flooded. I want to thank every one of our employees here at the Highway Department for the strong effort that has been put in. They are committed to their jobs of keeping the roads safe and restoring normal travel as soon as possible after a storm. The issue this year was the storms kept coming. As you can imagine, there was plenty of wear and tear and break downs of equipment along the way. The mechanics kept as much of the fleet available as possible. Working under a dripping truck chasing a phantom wiring issue is never fun. But they did all they could to keep the equipment on the road.

One example of this: there was one week where we had snow, ice and very cold temperatures. There was forecast for more storms beginning on Sunday of the next week. There was nothing forecast on Saturday, the crew could finally get a break. But our salt/sand supply was very low, and we had not had any time to truck in sand and mix additional material. We knew we were going to have supply problems with the next predicted storms as the temperatures would be so low that salt was ineffective and we would need to continue to use salt/sand as would our towns, which we also supply material to. We ask for volunteers to work on Saturday to ensure that we had adequate material on hand to address the anticipated needs. We had 18 employees who gave up the one day off they could have had, to work, ensuring that we had enough materi-

al to handle the next wave of storms.

My point is that Barron County is very fortunate to have the employees that we do. They care about what they do and want to do the best that they can given what nature throws at them. I am very proud of our crew, and I feel that they are the best!

So as it seems we may be headed to the end of winter (I won't believe it until June..) we will be moving onto maintenance activities such as patching the newest crop of potholes and the other work needed to restore the system. This will mean that there will be work zones around the county as we perform the needed work. April 8th-12th is National Work Zone Awareness Week. There will be press releases, news stories and public service messages throughout the week. Wednesday, April 10th is "**Wear Orange**" day. Work zone safety is very important to us here at the Highway Department. We work on the road in work zones EVERY DAY. It is nice that there is National Work Zone Awareness Week, but don't lose sight of the fact that there are work zones every day – work zones where our employees, your family and friends, work. We work close to traffic, with cars rumbling by and drivers distracted by cell phones. We see it every day. We experience close calls every day. So if you encounter a work zone, focus on driving and following the directions of the traffic control. The lives of our employees, your family and friends, depend on it. Did you know that in Wisconsin, there were nearly 2,700 crashes in work zones in 2017, resulting in over 1000 injuries and six fatalities? Did you know that the vast majority of those injured or killed in work zones were those traveling through the work zone, not working in it? So drive with caution when you encounter a work zone. You will be protecting yourself and those in your vehicle, as well as the workers. Everyone gets to go home!

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Finance

Jodi Busch
Finance Director

Spring time is audit time in the Finance Department. In addition to daily duties, staff has been very busy reconciling accounts and closing out 2018. The Highway audit fieldwork by our external auditors, CliftonLarson-Allen, will be conducted the week of March 25th. The county-wide audit will commence April 22nd.

The county-wide audit consists of CLA being onsite for approximately 4 weeks conducting fieldwork, which includes reviewing audit workpapers and reconciliations, testing internal controls, and reviewing grant activity. Based on this information, Financial Statements will be developed, compiled and submitted to various agencies with a deadline of July 31st. We strive to continually receive an unmodified audit opinion which is the highest

rating that can be received by Generally Accepted Accounting Principle (GAAP) standards. This score helps our bond rating as well as grant eligibility.

We continue to work on eliminating the Segregation of Duties finding in our Financial Statements. This finding is due to limited staffing in various areas of the county. With the 2017 audit, we assessed and rectified the areas of journal entries and Treasurer's cash reconciliation. With the 2018 audit, we have been working on the area of disbursements. Assessments started with CLA's December visit and we will continue to have conversations and implement changes when they are onsite in April and May. Because there are so many functions that need to be assessed, this project is taking a few years to complete.

County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook
County Clerk

UPCOMING ELECTION SCHEDULE FOR 2019:

- Spring Election - Tuesday, April 2

It doesn't happen often, but all of our municipalities with the exception of the City of Barron did not have a February Primary. City of Barron had to narrow their field of candidates from three to two for their at large aldermanic seat. The top two vote getters advanced to the Spring Election where one of them will be elected to that seat.

The Spring Election is just around the corner. Ballots and supplies have been distributed. State level races include the Justice of the Supreme Court. Candidates in that race are Brian Hagedorn and Lisa Neubauer. Court of Appeals Judge, District 3 is also a state level race on the April ballot but candidate Lisa K. Stark is unopposed. At odd year spring elections, all municipalities have elections for their various elected board positions. There are several contested municipal races for board chair and/or board members. All school districts also have school board positions on the ballot, some are contested and some are not. There are no referenda questions on the ballot this spring. There are no county level positions up for election at the Spring Election.

From time to time, I get asked how ballot order for candidates or political party is determined. The following explanation comes directly from the Wisconsin Election Commission website:

In a nonpartisan (Spring) election, the order in which candidates names appear on the ballot is determined by the drawing of lots, or by any method that is by chance. S. 5.60(1)(b), Wis. Stats. In a partisan primary, the order in which candidates of one party's names appear is also determined by lot. At a partisan General Election (such as for Governor or President) the ballot order is determined by which political party's candidate received the most votes at the last General Election. For example, Governor Walker received the most votes in the 2010 General Election, so Republican candidates were first on the 2012 General Election ballot. In 2012, President Obama received the most votes, so Democratic candidates are first on the 2014 General Election ballot. The ballot order for independent candidates is determined by lot.

I recommend that the drawing for ballot placement be conducted in a very transparent manner and never be done by only one person. For county level positions, I invite candidates that are involved and anyone else interested to come and observe the process. We place candidate's names on identical size pieces of paper then put them into container, shake them up, and then randomly draw them out one at a time by a person who is uninvolved in the election process. Candidate's names then appear on ballot in the order in which they get drawn. Any similar completely random method is acceptable.